

**BARTOW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Katelynn Oxley** of **Bartow High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Florida Softball Player of the Year**. Oxley is the first Gatorade Florida Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bartow High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Oxley as Florida's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Oxley joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jordyn Bahl (2020-21, Papillion-La Vista High School, Neb.), Megan Faraimo (2017-18, Cathedral Catholic High School, Calif.), Rachel Garcia (2014-15, Highland High School, Calif.) and Cat Osterman (2000-01, Cypress Springs High School, Texas).

The 5-foot-6 junior right-handed pitcher and outfielder led the Yellow Jackets to a 29-3 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Oxley posted a 23-2 mark in the circle with a 0.50 earned run average, striking out 307 batters while allowing just 45 hits in 154.1 innings pitched. A 2022 MaxPreps.com First Team All-American selection, she batted .447 with 23 runs scored, 33 RBI and a .588 slugging percentage.

Oxley has volunteered locally with Feed the Need, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Katelynn is by far the best pitcher we've faced in a while," said John Bridges, head coach of Lake Region High School. "She can change speeds and locations as well, which keeps the batter off balance and guessing a lot. All of her pitches look the same out of the hand so it's very difficult to pick up a certain pitch."

Oxley has maintained a weighted 4.43 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at the University of Florida beginning in the fall of 2024.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Oxley joins recent Gatorade Florida Softball Players of the Year Jazzy Francik (2021-22, Melbourne High School), Julia Knowler (2020-21, Fort Myers High School), Avery Goelz (2019-20, Lakewood Ranch High School), and Lexi Kilfoyl (2018-19, Academy at the Lakes), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

###